

CIVIL SERVICE
news

U.S. CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

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FOR RELEASE:

ADVANCE FOR THURSDAY MORNING NEWSPAPERS, AUGUST 1,
NOT TO BE USED BY PRESS, RADIO, OR TV BEFORE
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Under the authority of Public Law 92-255, the U.S. Civil Service Commission has instructed Federal agencies to establish programs for the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of drug abuse among employees, and to ensure (except for employment in certain sensitive agencies or positions specified in the Act) that no person is denied or deprived of Federal civilian employment due solely to prior drug abuse.

Development of the guidelines was preceded by consultation with Federal agencies, unions, and special interest groups and involved extensive subsequent consultation with the President's Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention.

Dr. Robert L. DuPont, Director of the White House Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention, said: "I feel these guidelines represent a positive approach to drug problems in the occupational setting and that they are appropriately performance oriented."

The guidelines parallel closely those initiating the Federal Civilian Employee Alcoholism Program three years ago, and state that agency programs should include the following policy:

1. That the agency recognizes drug abuse as a treatable health problem.
2. That for purposes of the policy, drug abuse is defined as a health problem in which the employee's job performance is impaired as a direct consequence of the use of drugs.
3. That employees with a drug abuse problem will receive the same careful consideration and offers of assistance that are presently extended to employees having any other illness or health problem.

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4. That the agency does not, however, condone employee drug activity which is contrary to law. When management has good reason to believe criminal conduct is directed towards or potentially harmful to the person or property of others, management's first obligation is to those persons or properties, and then to the employee involved.
5. That no employee will have his job security or promotion opportunities jeopardized by his request to designated personnel for counseling and referral assistance, except as limited by Section 413(c)(2) of Public Law 92-255 relating to sensitive positions.
6. That the confidential nature of medical/counseling records of employees with drug abuse problems will be preserved in accordance with Section 408 of Public Law 92-255 and the implementing regulations issued by the Special Action Office.
7. That sick leave will be granted for the purpose of treatment or rehabilitation as with any other health problem.
8. That employees who suspect they may have a drug abuse problem, even in the early stages, are encouraged voluntarily to seek counseling and information on a confidential basis by contacting the individual(s) designated to provide such services.

The guidelines also indicate that in considering applicants with a drug abuse history for Federal employment (except in the sensitive agencies or positions excluded by the Public Law), the Commission will make its determination on the basis of whether or not the applicant is a good employment possibility. In such cases, the length of time since the last abuse of drugs is less important than the steps taken by the applicant to secure treatment of his health problem.

In addition to their cooperative development of the guidelines, the Commission and the Special Action Office recently signed an interagency agreement transferring \$85,000 of the latter's funds to the Commission's Bureau of Intergovernmental Personnel Programs. The Bureau has subsequently made a grant award to the International Personnel Management Association to survey the employment policies and practices of State and local governments in regard to former drug abusers, and to develop a merit-based personnel system model designed to facilitate their employment and enhance the rehabilitation opportunities of employees with drug problems.

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